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## MUSICAL GRAMMARIANS.

THE science of harmony bears precisely the same relation to music that the science of grammar does to language. To speak or write correctly, it is necessary that we should have some rules to guide us—some recognised laws which we can mentally refer to whenever we are in doubt. To play or compose correctly it is also necessary that we should have an indisputable code of rules, which, having been laid down by the united wisdom of the greatest theorists, shall be our guide on all occasions. It is true that there are many who speak, and some who most unblushingly *write*, a language without the slightest knowledge of the laws of grammatical construction; there are also those who play, and even *compose*, music, as utterly destitute of any theoretical information on the subject; but these persons, instead of being *recognised*, are merely *tolerated*; the exhibition of their powers sufficiently seals their own condemnation; and literary men and musicians, upon whose province they would wish to encroach, merely look on with an occasional smile at their harmless presumption.

But although neither language nor music can properly be exercised unless we have established rules to guide us, by some extraordinary chain of reasoning many persons in the present day appear to imagine that there is in reality a wide difference between the two. The study of grammar is considered to be indispensable in the education of all who wish to speak or write a language elegantly and correctly; but the study of harmony seems at once to transform the musician into the composer. Because a man knows how to resolve discords properly, he publishes his exercises, and thinks himself a composer—because he has learned the construction of a *fugue*, he prints one and defies the critics to prove that it is “wrong.” Thus the musical world is deluged with a flood of learning, and the pedant endeavours to consider himself a genius, not because he has ever done anything *good*, but because he has never done anything *bad*.

But it is usually asked whether it is possible that persons can become eminent without deeply studying the principles of the art or science which they profess. Certainly not. To form the mind of a great composer, it is necessary that he should become a theorist; but no study in the world will place creative talent where no creative talent existed before. Many become theorists because they are men of genius, but none become men of genius because they are theorists.

When music becomes more generally studied, it will be thought no more necessary that a man should become a *composer*, because he can *write notes*, than that he should become an *author* because he can *write letters*. Genius alone should prompt him to become either; and, as *the public* will in time be accepted as the judge in all cases, he will at least have the good sense to abide by its decision. Until this time arrives (and various active measures are now at work to urge scarcely it forward) anything like a healthy tone in music, can be expected. But a love for the art, and a strong and earnest desire to promote its intellectual progress are now abroad. Music has taken root in England, and will shortly so spread and germinate that all shall be enabled to understand and appreciate it.

(From a series of papers in the “Musical World,” by Henry C. Lunn.)

## BRIEF CHRONICLE OF THE LAST MONTH.

SIR HENRY R. BISHOP has been giving a series of lectures at the Athenæum, Manchester, on the Lyric Drama. His subject comprised the consideration of the progress of Secular Music in Italy, Germany, France, and England, during the 18th century.

THE MELOPHONIC SOCIETY performed the “Creation” of Haydn to a crowded audience at Blagrove’s Rooms, in Mortimer Street. The choral members are as effective as ever, but the orchestra is capable of much improvement.

THE SACRED CONCERTS at Crosby Hall have been again resumed, under the direction of Miss Mounsey. Several works hitherto but little known have been introduced at the two concerts which have taken place, and gives good promise for the four evenings’ entertainments which are yet to come.

A Highland Piper having a pupil to teach music, commenced as follows. “Here, Donald, lad, gie’s a blast. So, noo—vera weel blawn, maun; but what’s sound, Donald, lad, without sense? Ye may blaw and blaw for aye without makin’ a tune o’t; gin I dinna tell ye how that queer thing on the paper maun help ye. Ye see that big fallow wi’ a roun open face, a semibreve ‘O’; he moves slowly frae one bar to another, while ye beet ane wi’ yere fit an’ gie a lang loud blast: gin ye’d pit a fit till him, he mak’ twa o’ him, and he’ll muve twice as fast; gin ye black his face, he’ll rin four times faster than the fallow wi’ the white face; beet gin after blackin’ his face, ye’ll bend his knee, or tie his legs, he’ll hop eight times faster than yon chap I show’d ye first. Now, whene’er ye blaw yer pipes, Donald, mend ye this, that the faster ye tee these fallow’s legs, the quicker they maun dance, and the faster they’ll be shure to rin.”—*Birmingham Musical Examiner*.

MR. LINCOLN has delivered four lectures at the Western Institution, which he calls “Evenings with the great composers.” The masters’ works which formed the subjects of his observations and illustrations were those of Haydn, Cherubini, Cimarosa and Mendelssohn.

THE SACRED HARMONIC SOCIETY, at Exeter Hall, have announced their usual performances of the “Messiah.” The oratorio will be given three times.

THE CECILIAN SOCIETY performed the “Creation” at their late meeting to a large audience.

THE WINCHESTER PHILHARMONIC SOCIETY performed Handel’s *Dettingen Te Deum* and a selection from Mozart’s first Mass, on the 27th of November. Most of the vocal and orchestral parts were filled by local musicians, with a slight assistance from London.

MANHEIM—An English lady recently writing from Manheim, in Germany, says:—“We went with Miss R. to the opera—going at six, coming out at eight, and paying a shilling—this is not much either of dissipation or extravagance. Here it is common for young ladies to go quite alone to the boxes when they have seats for the season, and you see the maids waiting for them at the door, with cloaks and umbrellas, as if they had only been to a neighbour’s to tea—yet it is a very good theatre, and you enter through a guard of soldiers.

The selection of Sacred Music from the works of Miss Eliza Flower was repeated to a very full audience, on the 10th, at Crosby Hall, and highly delighted a very crowded audience.